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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants : Kenichiro Kawato and Shigeyoshi Nishihara
Serial No. :
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Title : CONVEYANCE APPARATUS USING MOVABLE BODY
Group Art Unit. : Examiner :
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Mail Stop Patent Application
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Prior to substantive examination of the above-identified application, please amend the application, without prejudice, as follows:

Claims Amendments

1. (Currently Amended) A conveyance apparatus using movable bodies, each movable body [being able to move] movable along a fixed path [by being supported and guided on a main rail] by means of a plurality of guided devices, said guided devices supporting and guiding said movable body on

a main rail, each movable body having a main body formed by a plurality of frame members connected with connecting devices in a relatively rotatable fashion in a traverse direction with respect to a longitudinal direction [via connecting devices], [at least one of the frame members being provided with] a supporting section for conveyed items provided in at least one of the frame members, and vehicle axles coupling, in a relatively rotatable fashion, each of said guided devices [being coupled in a relatively rotatable fashion] to the movable body [by means of vertical axles], said conveyance apparatus further comprising: [wherein]

a plurality of lateral travel rail members [are provided] on a lateral side of a prescribed region of the fixed path, wherein:

said travel rail members [for] support[ing] and [guiding] guide the guided devices [in such a manner that] wherein the frame member provided with the supporting section assumes an orthogonal position with respect to a direction of travel, [whilst] and the other frame members [become] align[ed] with the direction of travel, and branching means [is provided] in the prescribed region [for causing] cause the guided devices on the main rail to branch off onto the plurality of lateral travel rail members.

2. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein a front frame member, a middle frame member and a rear frame member form the main body of the movable body, [is formed by three frame members and the supporting section is provided on] the middle frame member containing the supporting section, and the lateral travel rail members [are formed in] comprise a pair and [the movable body is conveyed in such a manner that a] the front frame member [thereof is] align[ed]s with one of the lateral travel rail members, and [a] the rear frame member [thereof is bent so as to be aligned] aligns with the other lateral travel rail member.

3. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1,

wherein when a plurality of movable bodies are supported and guided on the lateral travel rail members, guided devices of preceding and following movable bodies [which are] adjacently positioned in the direction of travel can be coupled together.

4. (Original) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein motional force applying means are provided for applying motional force to a movable body supported on the plurality of lateral travel rail members.

5. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein [the region where the lateral travel rail members are provided is formed into] a working path section for conveyed items is formed in the prescribed region.

6. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein the movable body [is formed with] has passive surfaces on side faces of the [respective] frame members [thereof], and feeding means having feed rollers [capable of] abutting [on these] the passive surfaces is provided in the fixed path.

7. (Original) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein said branching means comprises a plurality of divided rail members, formed by dividing the main rail in the prescribed region and capable of supporting the guided devices, and rotating devices for causing these divided rail members to rotate about vertical axes.

8. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein said branching means [is constructed so as to] branch off all of the movable bodies arriving at the prescribed region in the fixed path onto the plurality of lateral travel rail members.

9. (Currently Amended) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein [said branching means is constructed in such a manner that] the frame members other than the frame member provided with the supporting section assume an orthogonal attitude in a same

direction, with respect to the frame member provided with the supporting section.

10. (Original) The conveyance apparatus using movable bodies according to claim 1, wherein the movable body is provided with a supporting section for conveyed items in a lower portion of at least one of the frame members.